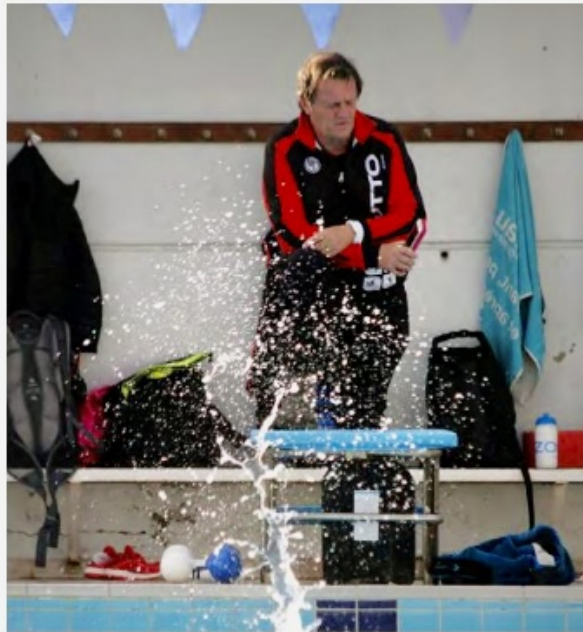


BEHIND THE SCENE

WITH BRETT SUTTON

INTERVIEW: PATRIZIA ZANETTI

IMAGE: BRETT SUTTON



BORN IN AUSTRALIA, BRETT SUTTON (58) TRAINS THE BIG NAMES IN THE SWISS TRIATHLON SCENE.* WITH HIS UNIQUE COACHING STYLE, HE HAS ALREADY BROUGHT MANY FEMALE ATHLETES TO THE TOP OF THE WORLD, INCLUDING THE SWISS ATHLETES NICOLA SPIRIG AND DANIELA RYF. IN 2017, SWITZERLAND NAMED HIM «COACH OF THE YEAR».

** Sutton has coached an Olympic male medallist, 2 ITU male world short course champions, 2 male ITU world long course champions, over 16 different Ironman male winners and is the only coach in triathlon history to fill entire World Cup male and female podiums. He currently has 4 different male Ironman / Ironman 70.3 winners in the squad.*

SPORTFIS@: YOU STARTED YOUR COACHING CAREER WHEN YOU WERE STILL A TEENAGER, FIRSTLY IN SWIMMING, THEN IN HORSE RACING AND OTHER SPORTS, AND FINALLY IN TRIATHLON. WHAT MAKES A GOOD COACH, IN GENERAL?

Brett Sutton: Communication. It is the biggest influence to get across the direction you want the individual to go.

IS IT MORE IMPORTANT, TO BE A SUCCESSFUL COACH, TO BE EXPERIENCED IN DOING THIS ACTIVITY, OR IN LOVING THE ACTIVITY ONE IS COACHING? OR PUT DIFFERENTLY, IN TRIATHLON, FOR EXAMPLE: DO YOU NEED TO BE A SUCCESSFUL TRIATHLETE TO BECOME A SUCCESSFUL TRIATHLON COACH, OR IS IT MORE IMPORTANT TO SHARE A DEEP LOVE WITH TRIATHLON WITHOUT HAVING THE LONG, PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE OF DOING IT? IF THE LATTER, WHAT MAKES YOU SO SUCCESSFUL?

I have never done a triathlon and I was the worst swimmer in my family by a long way. However, I believe both made me a better and more objective coach.

TRIATHLETES DEMAND MUCH FROM THEIR PHYSICAL ENDURANCE – ALL OF THE THREE DISCIPLINES REQUIRE DIFFERENT PHYSICAL ABILITIES. WHICH ARE THE TOP 3 PREREQUISITES TO BECOME A SUCCESSFUL TRIATHLETE?

First and foremost one has to be consistent in training and in personality. Second: They must be patient. Third: They must be persistent.

You get those three ingredients in a person, I can make them a decent triathlete .

HOW DOES IT DIFFER WHEN IT COMES TO MENTAL TRAINING? YOU ARE ONE OF THE FEW TRIATHLON COACHES WHO IS CONVINCED THAT MENTAL STRENGTH IS CRUCIAL...

Mental training involves different things for different sports.

Triathlon goes for a minimum of 2 hours. One has to develop self discipline. That is the main psychological difference that is needed - the ability to hold ones technique under very difficult circumstances.

WHAT EFFECT HAS THE IMPROVEMENT OF PERFORMANCE DIAGNOSTICS AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES HAD ON THE SUCCESS OF A TRIATHLETE?

We use none and seem to do quite well.

At times we have athletes use heart rate monitors so they don't push too hard in our longer runs.

WHAT IS THE AVERAGE LIFE-CYCLE OF A WORLD-STAR TRIATHLETE – UNTIL WHAT AGE CAN YOU BE GLOBALLY SUCCESSFUL?

Nicola Spirig just won her 6th European title at age 36 with 2 children. Others are finished at 26.

It's about the individual, their self belief and their individual circumstance.

IN WHAT DISCIPLINES OUTSIDE TRIATHLON, RUNNING, CYCLING OR SWIMMING, WOULD YOU SCOUT FOR NEW TRIATHLON TALENTS?

It depends on the distance. ITU short course racing is not triathlon.

It's a wet run.

Ironman triathletes can come from any sport but swimming is a great foundation.

HOW DO YOU CONVINCCE A NON-TRIATHLETE TO ENTER THE TRIATHLON BUSINESS?

That's easy and the reason why I got into the sport.

It's the most balanced exercise regime that one can do.

It is outstanding for all parts of the body: upper, lower, cardiovascular, and if done in moderation it is not boring like individual sports can be.